

Briefing – May 2008

Welcome to Holyrood Briefing

I hope you find the information here of interest. This briefing is distributed across the constituency. If you know of any group or organisation that would like to be added to the mailing list, please get in touch.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR TASK FORCE

I welcome the decision to establish a Task Force to tackle anti-social behaviour in the Greater Pollok area.

The spur for setting up this body has been the level of youth disorder in the Darnley and Arden areas with gang fights between groups of youths from these 2 areas.

The Task Force has the support of the local police, housing associations, councillors, community safety services and other agencies.

One of its campaigns has been to track down those responsible for vandalism and graffiti and visiting their parents to alert them to the behaviour of their children. This is time consuming but worthwhile work. I am confident that many parents, once they know what their child has been involved in, will act to stop this behaviour. Equally it is obvious that some parents need to be challenged to take responsibility for the actions of their children.

There has also been action to make the skateboard park and play area for young children in Arden safe and secure. There is also very useful work being done through the Chill Out in Arden and the extension of sports facilities throughout the constituency.

Across the constituency, from Lourdes Secondary to Penilee Community Centre and throughout the area, facilities are being opened up to young people. We need to direct young people to more positive activity and tackle those whose behaviour can cause such distress in local communities.

I am keen to support the work of the Task Force in any way I can as the safety and security of the people of Greater Pollok is a prime concern. We should follow the work of this Task Force closely to see if this approach could work in other areas.

GREATER POLLOK INTEGRATION NETWORK

It was a great privilege to be asked to open the Greater Pollok Integration Network Community flat in Kennishead.

The facility - which includes a computer suite - will provide training for everyone in the area. It will also offer a place for local groups to meet.

The Integration Network brings together local people with asylum seekers and refugees, all of whom are determined to work together to make the local community a better place.

QUARRIERS

Quarriers, along with wheelchair users, visited the Parliament recently to highlight the problems experienced with the quality of wheelchairs available.

All too often, a wheelchair does not offer the support needed because it is not designed for the specific person who is using it.

I was happy to commit myself to working with Quarriers and other MSPs to ensure that the basic right to a wheelchair that is fit for purpose is achieved.

FUEL POVERTY

Speaking recently in the Scottish Parliament in a debate on fuel, I urged continued action to address this problem especially when rising energy prices are making life so difficult for so many poor people.

I expressed surprise that the Scottish Government was unwilling to support measures which would give tax incentives to people making improvements in their own energy efficiency through solar panels and other means.

I said, "It is odd that a Cabinet Secretary who offered accelerated tax cuts to small businesses without conditions attached will not support the use of taxation as a means of encouraging positive action on energy efficiency."

JOHANN LAMONT SPEAKS OUT

I serve on the Local Government Committee and we recently took evidence on Scottish Planning Policy 3.

It sounds dusty and uninteresting but this is the policy which describes how local authorities should ensure that the proper mix of housing types are available - for families, young people, for sale or for rent, for example, and how the planning system should meet that need.

Any policy must ensure that Houses of Multiple Occupation and Private Landlord Registration legislation is enforced.

We need guarantees that the resources will be available to track down and deal with landlords who let out properties which are unsafe and those who take no responsibility, either for their tenants or for the communities in which their properties are located.

SURGERIES

Friday 9th May – 2pm – Labour Rooms, 996 Mossspark Drive, Cardonald

Saturday 10th May – 10am – The Wedge, 1066 Barrhead Road, Pollok

Friday 30th May – 2pm – The Wedge, 1066 Barrhead Road, Pollok

Saturday 31st May – 10am – Labour Rooms, 996 Mossspark Drive, Cardonald

Website address : <http://www.johann.org.uk>